

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 01302 120700Z

12

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY

AMCONSUL KARACHI

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TAGS: PFOR, PK, AF

SUBJ: CHARGES OF AFGHAN INVOLVEMENT IN SHERPAO ASSASSINATION

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 1223

B. ISLAMABAD 1256

C. KABUL 884

D. LONDON 1945

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY. ALTHOUGH GOP HAS MADE NO DIRECT CHARGE OF AFGHAN COMPLICITY IN ASSASSINATION OF NWFP HOME MINISTER SHERPAO, ITS ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS FOLLOWING THE EVENT CLEARLY IMPLY GOA INVOLVEMENT IF NOT IN THE MURDER ITSELF AT LEAST IN THE FOSTERING OF THE VIOLENT POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH IT WAS COMMITTED. THE ARREST OF LEADERS OF THE NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY FOLLOWED BY BANNING OF THE PARTY, LONG LINKED IN GOP DENUNCIATIONS WITH THE GOA; REFERENCE TO PAK-CLAIMED PAST AFGHAN INVOLVEMENT IN VIOLENT ACTIVITY; ALLEGATIONS

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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 01302 120700Z

ABOUT THE ROLE OF AFGHAN PROPAGANDA IN INCITING THE

ASSASSINATION; AND EMPHASIS ON THE RECENT MOVES OF FORMER NAP SECRETARY GENERAL AJMAL KHATTAK, NOW IN KABUL, ALL EVIDENCE THIS ACCUSATORY THEME. ADDITIONALLY, THE WIDESPREAD USE OF SUCH PHRASES AS "THOSE WHO WERE NEVER RECONCILED TO THE CREATION OF PAKISTAN" IN ACCUSATIONS BANDIED ABOUT BY PAK LEADERS AND IN MEDIA CAN READILY BE INTERPRETED TO INCLUDE THE GOA AND ITS "AGENTS" AS WELL AS THE NAP ITSELF. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

2. PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO HAS TWICE DRAWN LINKS BETWEEN THE AFGHANS AND THE SHERPAO MURDER. PRESS REPORTS THAT WHILE IN NEW YORK, JUST SUBSEQUENT TO LEARNING NEWS OF THE DEATH, BHUTTO TOLD JOURNALISTS THAT "UNFORTUNATELY, TERRORISM HAS BECOME THE PATTERN OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY AND AFGHANISTAN HAS A HAND IN IT". (HE ADDED THAT "I WOULD NOT SAY THAT INDIA HAD A HAND IN IT TOO"). SPEAKING IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON FEBRUARY 10, THE PRIME MINISTER ASSERTED THAT, IN RECENT YEARS, THERE HAD BEEN AN UPSURGE OF VIOLENCE WHICH "WOULD HAVE NOT BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT FOREIGN LINKS," ABOUT WHICH "SOME MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HAD BEEN BOASTING". THESE "MEMBERS HAD ALSO REFUSED TO CONDEMN WHEN SOMEONE SLIPPED OUT OF PAKISTAN AND WORKED AGAINST IT". CENTRAL MINISTER FOR EDUCATION HAFIZ PRIZADA HAS ALSO LINKED AFGHAN WITH ASSASSINATION.

3. RADIO KABUL PROPAGANDA IN PAKISTAN TIMES, FEBRUARY 11, FRONT PAGE ACCOUNT, IS LINKED WITH SHERPAO MURDER. ACCOUNT CHARGES THAT "CONSISTENTLY INCITED VIOLENCE" EMANATING FROM RADIO KABUL "BEGAN THE COUNTDOWN ON SHERPAO'S LIFE ON THE 13TH OF LAST MONTH", WHEN RADIO KABUL DECLARED THAT NOTHING WOULD SAVE SHERPAO FROM THE ANGER OF THOSE AGAINST HIM IF HE REMAINED ON "THE SOIL OF THE PAKHOTOONS". ACCOUNT ALSO STATES THAT "SOME DETAILS ABOUT THOSE WHO WERE OPERATING

AGAINST SHERPAO AND OTHER TARGETS IN PAKISTAN "WERE GIVEN IN INTERVIEW BY BBC CORRESPONDENT TONY MASON IN KABUL ON JANUARY 28 OF AJMAL KHATTAK, FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL OF NAP WHO BBC CALLED FOCUS OF UNDERGROUND ORGANIZATION WHICH CLAIMS SEVERAL HUNDRED BANDS OPERATING IN PAKISTAN". (SEE REFERENCE D) LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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4. SEVERAL PRESS EDITORIALS TRACE AFGHAN OR OTHER ANTI-PAKISTAN ELEMENTS AS LINKED TO MURDER: PAK TIMES, FEBRUARY 11, BLAME FOR CRIME CAN BE "SQUARELY PLACED ON ANTI-STATE ELEMENTS, LED BY AJMAL KHATTAK FROM KABUL AND OPERATING THEIR CAMPAIGN OF LAWLESSNESS THROUGH HIS NAP CONFIDENTS AND CONFEDERATES AT HOME". THESE ELEMENTS "HAVE NEVER DISASSOCIATED THEMSELVES FROM KABUL'S RELENTLESS PROPAGANDA AGAINST PAKISTAN

AND INTERFERENCE IN ITS AFFAIRS, OR FROM "DISRUPTIVE ACTIVITY TO UNDERMINE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE COUNTRY". THESE ELEMENTS "HAVE ALWAYS TAKEN UP THE CUDGELS ON BEHALF OF AFGHANISTAN;" NEW TIMES, FEBRUARY 11, "THE ANTI-PAKISTAN LOBBY IN THE WORLD MUST BE EXTREMELY HAPPY OVER THIS DEVELOPMENT"(SHERPAO'S DEATH).

5. SOME VERNACULAR PRESS EDITORIALS IN SAME VEIN: LEADING INDEPENDENT NAWA-I-WAQT, FEBRUARY 11, "IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND THAT WHATEVER IS GOING ON IN THE NORTH WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE (BOMBINGS) AFGHAN AGENTS HAVE THEIR HANDS IN IT. AGENTS COULD BE HIRED LOCALLY OR COULD BE AFGHAN NATIONALS. AJMAL KHATTAK HAS HIMSELF ADMITTED THAT HIS AGENTS ARE ENGAGED IN THESE ACTIVITIES"; PPP OWNED MUSAWAAT, FEBRUARY 11, CHARGES "DIRECT AFGHAN INVOLVEMENT IN BOMB BLAST WITH AFGHANS WORKING THROUGH NAP AGENT IN KABUL, AJMAL KHATTAK, WHO IS RESPONSIVLE FOR TRAINING SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS AND SMUGGLING THEM ACROSS PAK BORDER". EDITORIAL ALSO IMPLIES THAT, COMING WHEN IT DID, I.E., ON THE EVE OF PRIME MINISTER'S PROPOSED TRIP TO ROMANIA, A PART OF SOVIET BLOC, THAT THE ASSASSINATION WAS AN ATTEMPT AT UPSETTING PAKISTAN'S BALANCED FOREIGN POLICY.

6. TV AND RADIO: GOVERNMENT-OWNED PAKISTAN TELEVISION CORPORATION FEBRUARY 10 AND RADIO PAKISTAN FOLLOWING DAY IN COVERAGE OF KILLING QUOTED EXTENSIVELY FROM JANUARY 13 RADIO KABUL PROGRAM MENTIONED PARA 2 AND FROM AJMAL KHATTAK'S BBC INTERVIEW.
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